

YOGA FOR THE MIND

Urban Artist

A MAGAZINE OF BALANCE & SELF EXPRESSION



JANUARY - MARCH 2025

Cover
1923's Vintage Egyptian Dress with Peacock Fan
from 1920's Fashions Most influential Decade
by Neal Barr

Pg 26
Correction Model is Pat McGuire not Veronica Hamel as
erroneously stated.

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THE STORY BEHIND THE LENS:

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GORDON BUNCH

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Yucca- Gordon Bunch

Letter from the Editor

What I love about my work with Urban Artist is the chance to meet talented people in all areas of art. I love learning who they are and experiencing their passion for what they do. Over the last year, I have spoken to artists from all mediums. Like these artists, it's my passion to share how they view the world around them with Urban Artist's readers.

"I think everything in life is art. What you do, how you dress. The way you love someone and how you talk. Your smile and your personality. What you believe in, and all your dreams. The way you drink your tea. How you decorate your home. Or party. Your grocery list. The food you make. How your writing looks. And the way you feel. Life is art."

-Helena Bonham-Carter

This issue of Urban Artist Magazine allowed me to speak to two talented photographers, Neal Barr and Gordon Bunch. Although they started their art at very different times, they shared the same passion for it.

Neal Barr's passion for photography started very early in life. After his mother purchased a camera, he began taking pictures when he was fifteen (1948). Neal always knew what he wanted to do; this was a predestined career that spanned decades.

He started out assisting three top fashion photographers during his years in New York from 1959 - 1962. Then, on his own, working with top magazines, such as Harper's Bazaar, Sports Illustrated, and Vogue, to name a few.

In 1978, he began to work on a passion project, a book on 1920s fashion entitled 1920s: Fashions Most Influential Decade (publisher M27editions), till he moved back to Ventura, California, and set up his studio in 2000 to finish his book. This book looks into the era's history of fashion and craftsmanship.

Gordon Bunch was the next artist I had the privilege of interviewing. He started later in life and had different motivations for his photography. Gordon loves the outdoors, and his photos convey a sensitivity to nature, which is, in many ways, his reason for choosing this subject matter. He loves to capture what others may not pay attention to in nature. I like to say the "little things" that we might walk by or ignore.

Gordon knew to continue with art and to be creative; he would have to pivot due to being diagnosed with Parkinson's. He combined his love for the outdoors and exercise with a new way of walking through life; it didn't stop his creative spark it just opened new doors.

I hope you enjoy these two artists' work as much as I do. They are both fantastic people. I respect them both: Neal, who brings images of history to celebrate the craftsman, and Gordon, who shines a light on the tiny creatures we share this world with.

Kathy Gonzales
Publisher/Editor/Writer

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“A Brush with Nature: Three Artists’ Perspectives.”

January 18, 2025 - May 4, 2025

Three of Santa Clarita’s most talented women artists, each employing a distinct medium, will showcase over 30 original artworks at the Santa Paula Art Museum (SPAM).

Artists’:

Sandy Fisher Oil Painter

Mardilan Georgio Pastel

Charlotte Mullich Watercolorist

Have teamed up to present their interpretations of nature, from landscapes and seascapes to flora and fauna



Santa Paula Art Museum
117 N 10th St, Santa Paula, CA 93060

Hours:

Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.,
Sunday 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Closed Monday and Tuesday

Mardilan Georgio

works in pastels and brings seascapes and landscapes to life with realistic color and ethereal strokes which evoke movement and natural forms.

Charlotte Mullich

offers a delicate portrayal of creatures such as birds, butterflies and koi. She uses fluid washes, as well as positive and negative painting to convey the grace and vitality of animals in their habitats.

Sandy Fisher

captures the magic of the landscape and flora with a sense of honesty and nuanced layers of color using strong compositional elements to provide a solid foundation to her artwork.

All three are accomplished representational artists who offer their unique responses to create a compelling dialogue about the relationship between art and nature, celebrating both the diversity and harmony in the environment.

Admission to the premiere party on Saturday, January 18, 2025, is \$5 for SPAM Members and \$10 for non-members. Beer, wine, and hors d'oeuvres will be served. All of the artworks will be available for purchase.

For further information please call: (805) 525-5554 or visit <https://www.santapaulaartmuseum.org/event/a-brush-with-nature>

NEAL BARR'S LIFE LONG PASSION FOR FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY

THE STORY BEHIND THE LENS: AN ICONIC
CAREER AND A PASSION PROJECT OF 60
YEARS FOR 1920'S FASHION

K. GONZALES





1920

1920's Vintage Silk Kimono Dress

Neal Barr from Harper's Bazaar to Vintage Elegance:

I first learned about Neal Barr when I interviewed *Chef Pascale Beale* (author of *Flavour M27 Editions*) for the fourth edition of Urban Artist Magazine. She said, "You know who you should interview? Neal Barr." After seeing his website and his work, I knew I wanted to get an interview. We had two things in common: the love of photography and vintage clothing. Neal's career is a testament to artistry, resilience, and an unwavering passion for preserving history.

Born in 1933 in Ventura, California, Neal's journey into photography began at age 15 when his mother gifted him his first camera, an Argus C3 35mm. Now, at age 91, Neal is reflecting on the successful life of that gift, which set him on a path leading to a remarkable career as a celebrated fashion photographer.

"I'm not one to approach a subject with a hand-held camera hanging from my neck. I've almost always used a tripod, and all the images within the frame are somewhat staged."

His early influences came from the centerfolds of *Esquire Magazine*, which featured illustrations by George Petty or Alberto Vargas. Later, he discovered Gibson, Leynedecker, and Erté.

You will recognize the influence of Erté in his work from his passion project, which can be seen in his book, **1920s Fashion's Most Influential Decade (M27 Editions)**. This two-volume book is a testament to a time when fashion was beautifully handcrafted. Many of the pieces, handbags, dresses, coats, jewelry, and all the mannequins he constructed for this project are in Neal's private collection of vintage wear.



Early years

After serving in the military from 1954 to 1955 as a public information officer in Germany, Neal returned home with a clear vision of his future. He enrolled at the Brooks Institute of Photography, in Santa Barbara (now closed), where he began experimenting with light, composition, and storytelling.

Even as a student, Neal's creative instincts shone brightly. For his assignments, he

Neal Barr

would rent or purchase 1920s clothing and pay his classmates to model for him.



Early work of his classmate from Brooks Institute

This early fascination with the elegance of the Roaring Twenties would later become the cornerstone of his lifelong passion project.

In 1958, Neal moved to New York City and assisted renowned photographers and editors, including Ray Kellman at *Seventeen Magazine* and Wilhela Cushman of *Ladies' Home Journal*. While working under Cushman, he learned to handle high-pressure shoots, including one particularly chaotic session involving a vomiting camel and a panicked model. These experiences shaped Neal's ability to remain calm, adaptable, and creative.

From 1960 to 1962, Neal honed his skills further as an assistant to the legendary

Irving Penn, where he learned to master lighting techniques that would define his signature style.

In 1962, Neal opened Neal Barr Studio LTD in New York City, specializing in fashion and beauty photography for leading magazines and advertising agencies.



Neal's studio way at the top! Natural lighting!

His portfolio featured editorial and advertising work for *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue*, *Sports Illustrated*, and an impressive roster of clients, including Revlon, Cover Girl, Estée Lauder, Christian Dior, and Halston. He photographed celebrities like Sharon Tate, Muhammad Ali (then Cassius Clay), Warren Beatty, and Barbara Feldon, as well as fashion icons like Ungaro, Balenciaga, and Rudi Gernreich.

Later, Barbara Feldon's husband, Lucien Feldon, would become Neal's representative to the fashion world.

"I knew I was on to something ... it was time to get to work"

Turning a negative into a positive

Neal's determination and ability to transform setbacks into opportunities became a defining trait early in his career. When the head art director at Harper's Bazaar, Marvin Israel, personally brought Neal's portfolio out to Lucien Feldon Neal's representative, he threw the portfolio at Lucien's feet. He said, "Why do you waste my time." Lucien told Neal, "I should have punched his lights out." Neal knew portfolios were customarily left at the front desk for pick up without comment. So, Neal refused to be discouraged. Instead, he saw the critique as motivation to refine his craft.

After all, if his work could have been better, why would Marvin Israel have brought it out himself and not just left it at the desk? He knew he was on to something, so he began experimenting with light, movement, and flow. His work eventually earned him a position as a contributing photographer for Harper's Bazaar from 1966 to 1974. He landed the cover of Harper's in 1967.

Despite his impressive résumé, Neal's passion lay in a project he had been working on for over six decades: an anthology of 1920s fashion. Neal painstakingly curated and photographed a collection of authentic clothing (most of which he owns, and some from other collections), jewelry, handbags, shoes, and

over 400 hats from what he called "fashion's most influential decade."

Each item was a masterpiece of artistry, adorned with intricate embroidery, beadwork, and design elements that reflected a time when even everyday attire was a form of self-expression.

Vintage 1920's Project

"People dressed for everything, even running errands was an occasion to look your best."



1920's fashion Neal Barr Photography

Neal Barr

Working alone in his Ventura studio, Neal brought his 1920s Vintage clothing collection to life. He used mannequins that he designed to mimic the fluidity and movement of live models, which allowed him to move them more realistically. He modified the mannequins to move in hips, wrists, and waists.

These photographs help capture the garments and spirit of the 1920s. He meticulously prepared each piece from his collection and that of other collectors, steaming dresses, sewing loose beads, and pairing hats and bags with the perfect outfits. Neal's dedication extended to rescuing pristine, unworn shoes and stockings from a closing New York store, saving these treasures from being discarded and a way of preserving fashion history. This entirely self-driven project resulted in enough material for a two-volume book.

Neal believes the 1920s represented a turning point in fashion when artistry and craftsmanship flourished. "People dressed for everything," he said. "Even running errands was an occasion to look your best." His collection is a visual archive and a resource for study at fashion institutes and film productions, offering a glimpse into a world where creativity lived in every stitch.

Neal's work has been exhibited at the Staley-Wise Gallery in New York, the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and in private collections worldwide. After 43 years in New York City, Neal returned to Ventura in 2000 at the age

of 67, where he continued to work on his passion project. And continue to honor his love for photography and history.

Also at the end of this article be sure to click on the link which will take you to **M27Editions** website where you can view a trailer of a documentary made on Neal's project entitled:

Threads of Time

Documentary Film—Trailer

A project 60 years in the making and the living master who orchestrated it.

These next few pages are just a glimpse into Neal's work. I encourage you to visit his site, or purchase his book, this look into fashion history is just amazing.

To see more of these beautiful photos please visit Neal's site at:

Neal Barr

<https://Nealbarr.com>

1920s Fashion's Most Influential Decade

can be purchased at:

M27editions

<https://www.m27editions.com/1920s/>

Celebrities



(left) Sharon Tate Harper's Bazaar - Feb 1967

(mid left) Diane Keaton Harper's Bazaar,
March 1974, Fashion Diane Von Furstenberg

(Below) Barbara Feldon - Agent 99 Harper's
Bazaar 1968



Celebrities



Warren Beatty - Film Actor and Director - Harper's Bazaar - May 1968

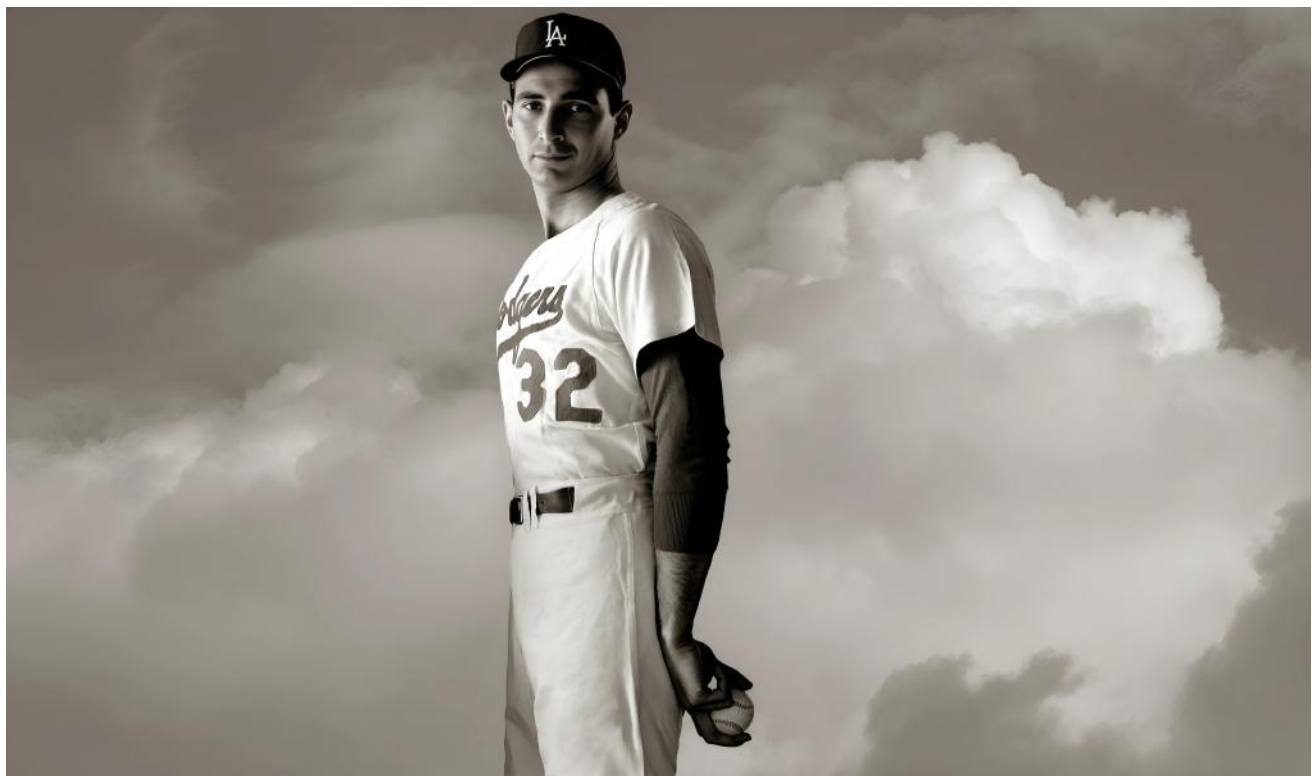


Harper's Bazaar - 1974 Angela Lansbury age 49.
Broadways' original "Mame" - A Five Time Tony Award Winner

Sports Celebrities



Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) Sports Illustrated 1963



Sandy Koufax Baseball Hall of Fame Player Sports Illustrated - 1963

Fashion Covers





Neal's first cover
for Harper's
Bazaar, March
1967
Original Color
Image from
Double Fold-Out
Model - Astrid
Shiller,
Art Directors -
Ruth Ansel &
Bea Feitler
Dress by BURKE-
AMEY,
Hat by Halston at
BERGDORF
GOODMAN

Neal Barr

Harper's Bazaar 1967



Bazaar - May 1967 Original Cover Image Model- Cathee Dahmen
Art Director - Ruth Ansel & Bea Feitler. Fashion CASTILLO



Neal Barr

Paris Fashion Shoot



Bazaar Paris 1968 - Model- Cathee Dahmen in Marc Bohan for Dior



Nina Ricci Paris 1968



Emeric Partos 1965 Advertisement

REVLON FRAGRANCE AD 1970



Revlon Fragrance ad with Model Pat McGuire and a very cooperative cheetah. This shot took a lot of time and patience on everyone's part. First Pat got to know her co-model. Neal shot them together then, just Pat on left, and then the handler and the cheetah.



The final shot Neal blended the two images together to achieve this beautiful shot.

Neal Barr

Sports Illustrated 1964



*Flamin' Mamie's Bouffant Belles Sports Illustrated 1964
Neal's most requested photo*

1920's Fashion Project



Neal, age 45, begins his first test for the 1920s book project at his studio in New York. He collected many clothes from vintage venues and flea markets on the East Coast.

Egyptian Revival dresses, Neal owned the dress on the left, era 1926, and the other also 1926 belong to the Fay Fleetman collection.

He was using Adel Rootstein Mannequins that he owned; later, he would make modifications to these mannequins that would allow more movement for better poses.

*The following pages show some of Neal's work with vintage fashion. To see his full work see his book **1920s Fashion's Most Influential Decade**.*



This was the final shot for the book.



This photo exemplifies what it takes to shoot a book—two volumes of vintage fashion—on your own. This rigging was created by Neal in his studio in Ventura, CA.

Neal Barr



With a decering eye Neal took several shots he referred to the above shots as rejects.



The final shot that made the book.



1928

1928 Vintage dress with shawl

1920's Accessories, Hats, and Shoes





Opposite page: 1927 Embroidered Mosaic hat.

(Left) 1928 interlocking green felt hat is handcrafted.

(below right) 1928 Black /Beige with buttons.

(below Left) 1920 Purple hat with brooch.

Neal's collection includes many hats and accessories; he said he owns around 400 hats. This is just a small sampling and there are so many beautiful pieces.





*Vintage 1929 Red and Black Art Deco handbag, Gloves and Bangles
This is just one of many representations of the many handbags and
accessories Neal owns.*



One day, while walking in New York during a changing fashion era, Neal passed by a shoe store that was going out of business. He noticed they were throwing brand-new, unworn shoes in the trash. Naturally, Neal decided to fish them out, and now the shoes you see on these pages are part of his collection.

(left) 1926 I. Miller satin shoe with gold buckle and pearl button

(below) 1927 satin & velvet buckle down easy strap pump with gold leather trim





1920s Fashion's Most Influential Decade can be purchased at:

m27 | EDITIONS

<https://www.m27editions.com/1920s/>

m27 | EDITIONS

to view a trailer on the documentary entitled :

"Threads of Time"

A project 60 years in the making and the living master who orchestrated it.



Photographer Neal Barr (91)

Through his lens, Neal Barr has documented fashion and preserved the artistry of a bygone era. His work reminds us that creativity, whether in photography, fashion, or any other medium, is a timeless celebration of human expression.

Neal continues to work on another passion project restoring The Wellsboro Glass Negative Collection 1890 - 1917 showcasing the fashions from 1890 - 1917.

Visit his website to see many more interesting projects he has worked on.

Neal Barr

<https://Nealbarr.com>

Gordon Bunch

Nature renews

K.Gonzales



Artist/Photographer Gordon Bunch took up photography in retirement shortly after moving from Los Angeles to the desert community of Rancho Mirage in California's Coachella Valley two years ago.

Drawn to the area because of the mountain ranges and flora and fauna of the desert landscape, Gordon's love for the outdoors is palpable.

This love and passion for photography led him to take up a hobby that brought him joy and new opportunities and friendships. Photography isn't the first medium Gordon has dabbled in; he loves to paint and has a love for art. But four years ago, at age 67, he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. He felt Parkinson's made it difficult to continue with his painting, so he started to look for other creative outlets that he could do, considering his physical limitations. Photography filled that creative calling. Gordon's love for wildlife is evident in his focus on birds and insects.

These tiny creatures open up a whole new world for Gordon.

"I have an eye for the smaller creatures we pass by daily and barely notice. Their shapes, colors are fascinating and sometimes even other-worldly, their behaviors are pretty complex and entertaining. Photographing and sharing them with others is my way of saying, Slow down now and then and take in the beauty surrounding us."

His photos convey a sensitivity to nature, which is, in many ways, his reason for choosing this subject matter.

His love for the outdoors shines brightly in his work. There is a sensitivity to his work, capturing the smallest of creatures that inhabit our world. Calling us to keep in mind the world isn't just about humans but all creatures who inhabit it.

How long have you been interested in photography, and have you ever delved into other art mediums?

After my retirement nine years ago, I purchased a Canon D70 DSLR camera, intending to take up photography as a hobby, but I didn't pursue it seriously then. I used the camera almost exclusively to photograph family holidays and vacations. At that point in my life, I focused more on physical activities like hiking, running, and bodybuilding. Regarding the arts, my husband and I have a considerable collection of paintings. I also took up painting for a brief period, but it was cut short after being diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease.

What led you to photography?

My interest in photography was rekindled a year and a half ago after moving from Los Angeles to Rancho Mirage. After living in Los Angeles for over 50 years, I became immediately fascinated with the desert's beautiful topography, flora, and wildlife inhabiting the Coachella Valley. It has also significantly helped that my dear friend and next-door neighbor is a professional photographer who took me under his wing and has served as my mentor. We go on photo excursions at least weekly during the more temperate months of the year.

Gordon Bunch

Who do you admire most in the photography world?

Ansel Adams. I intend to focus more on landscape photography in 2025 as it presents a new challenge.

What do you love most about photography?

I love that photography takes me outdoors. It is an excellent exercise, requiring considerable walking, hiking, and stamina. I love the creative process, searching for the best possible composition and angle and changing settings for different effects about lighting and background. The creative process continues with photo editing afterward. At times, I get more pleasure from photo editing than from taking the shots.

What do you shoot on?

Most of my photos are taken with a Canon R-5 mirrorless camera. I upgraded to this from my Canon D70 primarily because of the need for superior lens and body stabilization it provides. These features and a higher shutter speed help compensate for blur due to my Parkinson's tremor.

You picked nature photography as your subject. What do you love most about this area of photography as opposed to portrait or journalistic photography?

I have a strong interest in wildlife photography. I have always enjoyed the outdoors, and the fantastic creatures that inhabit this desert community are captivating. I am particularly drawn to birds and insects. I have an eye for the smaller creatures we tend to pass by daily

and often ignore. Their colors and shapes are fascinating and complex, and their behaviors are usually quite entertaining and expressive. I take photos of them and share them with others, saying, "Slow down now and then and take in the beauty that surrounds us."

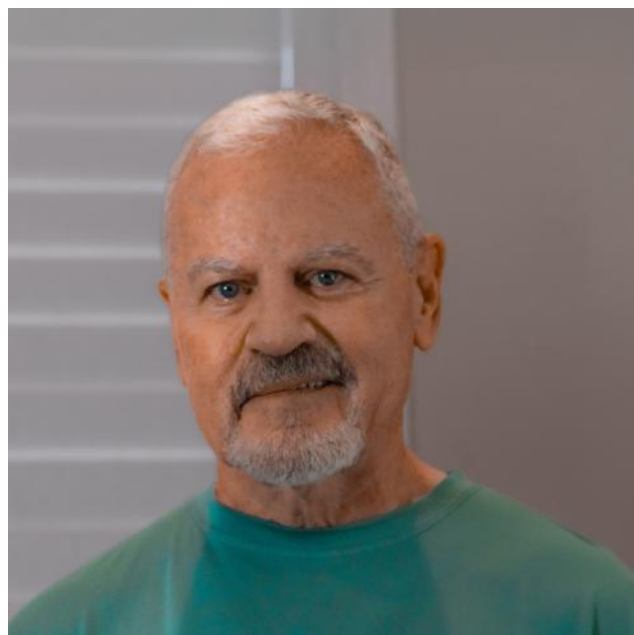
Are you part of a photography club?

Yes. I participate in a photo club in my retirement community that meets monthly. I participate in an online photo club that meets weekly for 4 months each year.

What is next for your art? Are there any upcoming shows?

Landscape photography, as mentioned above. As well as floral art. No, not at this time.

Keep your eyes out for Photographer Gordon Bunch, I have a feeling we will see him in a few Photography shows in Rancho Mirage, CA.



Photographer Gordon Bunch, follow him on Instagram @rmgordonphoto



Oyster Mushrooms



Young Warbler on Duranta



Quail by Pond



Lorquins's Admiral



Grasshopper



Balloons at the Westin



Dessert Lights

UA Magazine Selected Exhibitions

Los Angeles

The Getty

1200 Getty Center Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90049

Paper and Light

Oct 15, 2024 - Jan 19, 2025

Ultra-Violet: New Light on Van Gogh's Irises

Oct 1, 2024 - Jan 19, 2025

Maria Magdalena Campos-Pon: Behold **Feb.11-May 4, 2025**

A Brush with Nature: Romantic Landscape Drawings

Feb 18 - May 25, 2025

Gustave Caillebotte: Painting Men **Feb 25- May, 2025**

LACMA

5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los
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Digital Witness: Revolutions in Design, Photography, and Film

November 24, 2024 - July 13, 2025

Moma

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Angeles, CA 90035

Pirouette: Turning Points in Design Member Previews, Jan 24-25

Jan26-Oct 18, 2025

Jack Whitten: The Messenger Member Previews, Mar 20-22

Mar 23- Aug 2, 2025

Pasadena

Norton Simon Museum

411 West Colorado Boulevard
Pasadena, CA 91105

Retrospect: 50 years at the Norton Simon Museum

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Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara Museum of ART

1130 State Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

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Stillness **Nov 17, 2024 - Mar 16, 2025**

Accretion **Sept 29, 2024 - April 13, 2025**

Sullivan Goss

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Santa Barbara, CA 93101

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